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EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE¹

Mohamad Johdi Salleh

Abstract

This paper discusses a model of leadership from an Islamic perspective. Drawn from a concatenation of authentic Islamic texts and sources, the model comprises ten principles synopsized simply as L-E-A-D-E-R-S-H-I-P with each letter illustrating a principle of good governance. The principles were derived from a thorough examination and analysis of various sources that included the Qur'an, prophetic traditions, biographies of the Prophet's companions, thoughts of classical and contemporary scholars, and best practices in Islamic leadership. In essence, the model proposes that a leader should lead like an imam in prayers, educate and be educated, communicate explicit organisational aims and vision, use effective delivery strategies, empower those under him rather than keeping all power to himself, and lead in piety with justice, integrity and humility. The model is comprehensive--offered as a solution to guide the leadership and management practices of educational institutions in the Muslim world. The application of the model and adherence to its principles should help to develop Muslim leaders' competencies, promote organisational transformation among Muslim institutions, and forge greater solidarity within their working communities.

Keywords: Educational Leadership, Good Governance, Islamic Leadership, Leadership Model

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Introduction

In the study of leadership, the most common approach is to concentrate on leader characteristics and traits. This approach assumes that certain characteristics, like physical energy or friendliness, are essential to effective leadership, while inherent personal qualities like intelligence, knowledge, and fluency in speech are transferable from one situation to another. Leaders must be able to communicate clearly, build teams, motivate professionals, embrace diversity, and resolve conflicts in an organisation. Through his legacy of words and deeds, the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) had emphasised some of the major roles of a Muslim leader, part of which is to protect his community against tyranny and oppression, encourage God-consciousness (*taqwa*), promote justice and trustworthiness, inquire about the welfare of his subjects/people, and guide them towards good deeds.

Educational Leadership Model: An Islamic Perspective

This paper presents a model of Islamic leadership, abbreviated in the acronym “LEADERSHIP”, as a guide to develop Muslim competencies and help transform Muslim institutions from rigidity to dynamism. The L-E-A-D-E-R-S-H-I-P principles were synthesized from various authentic sources which included the Qur’an, the Prophet’s (S.A.W) words and practices, the deeds of the illustrious companions, and the thoughts of classical and contemporary scholars. In addition, best practices were identified from a repertoire of research on the performances of Muslim academic administrators and leaders in various educational institutions. This paper synthesizes the evidence and best practices in leadership into a concise Islamic model comprising ten principles of good governance. They are discussed in the ensuing sections.

Leading: Leader as Imam for the People and Organisation

The first principle is to lead the people and organisation in the role of imam. The main concern of a Muslim leader is to lead his subjects/people and subordinates to what is good for themselves and the organisation, the present life and the hereafter. A leader should be

capable of directing all those under him towards understanding the vision of the organisation and implement appropriate strategies to achieve his duties effectively in the best manner possible. A Muslim leader should possess intelligence and a high cognitive ability; he should be able to solve problems and make wise decisions. These qualities are paramount as he is responsible for directing his followers and others in the organisation to goodness and to becoming good Muslims or good citizens. In *Surah Al-Anbiya*, Allah the Almighty said:

“And we made them leaders, guiding (men) by Our command, and We inspired them to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers and to give zakat and they constantly served Us (and Us only)” (*Al-Anbiya*: 73).

A leader with charisma and clear capabilities can create a positive organisational environment. Subordinates are more likely to follow his directives if they believe he knows what he is doing. If a leader’s capabilities are doubted, his subordinates will be less accepting of his directives. He should have self-confidence because how an individual feels about himself on a continuum of weak and strong will indicate whether he is convincing in judgment, decision making, ideas, and other constructive capabilities.

The focus of leadership in Islam is doing good deeds for the sake of Allah, the Muslim community, and mankind. In *Surah Al-Baqarah*, Allah says:

“And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled: He said: “I will make thee an Imam to the Nations.” He pleaded: “And also (Imams) from my offspring!” He answered: “But My Promise is not within the reach of evil-doers.” (*Al-Baqarah*: 124)

Hence in this context, we can refer to the period of the Prophet (S.A.W) and his companions who, through their good deeds, painted a clear picture of Islamic leadership, be it in the male or female role. As reported by Abdullah Ibn Umar (R.A), the Prophet (S.A.W) said,

“Behold! Each of you is a guardian, and each of you will be asked about his subjects” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*).

A Muslim leader must be able to see the big picture of the running of his organisation and have a sound understanding of its contextual setting. Islamic leadership entails the ability to envision a long-term future for the organisation and link long-range visions and concepts to daily work and responsibilities. It can be considered to be the establishment of an outward-looking organisation, which builds an understanding of possible future directions and involves engaging in strategic conversations, debate and strategic planning to focus on the most appropriate direction and approaches.

Education: Seeking the Betterment of Self and Society through Knowledge

The first revelation of *Surah Al-Alaq* can be taken as a declaration against illiteracy and ignorance. The *surah* is an encouragement to Muslims and the rest of mankind to seek knowledge as knowledge is the fundamental element of education that determines the ranks of individuals in society. *Surah Al-Alaq* reads:

“Read! In the name of your Lord, who created man, out of a mere clot of congealed blood. Read: And your Lord is Most Generous. He who taught the use of the pen. Taught man that which he knew not.” (*Al-Alaq*: 1-5)

The *surah* emphasises the importance and value of education in Islam, which is a subject matter clearly articulated in the religion since its very beginning.

Islamic education aims at the total human personality, its balanced growth and development of seven important components consisting of the physical form (*J-jasmani*), emotion (*E-emosi*), spiritual realm (*R-rohani*), intellect (*I-intelek*), socialization (*S-sosialisasi*), behavior and morality (*A-akhlak*), and vicegerency (*H-hamba Allah*). These comprehensive aspects, simply acronymed as JERISAH, must be considered in the training and education of Muslims in such a way that faith is infused into their whole

personality, creating within themselves an emotional attachment to Islam that enables them to follow the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

Education in Islam, the Prophet (S.A.W) highlighted, is a life-time process starting from the cradle all the way to the grave. It is a wholesome process of preparing an individual to actualize his role as a vicegerent (*Khalifah*) of Allah on earth and equipping him with knowledge and skills so that he may contribute meaningfully to the development and reconstruction of his society in order to achieve well-being in this world and the hereafter. The role and value of knowledge and education in the *deen* are ineliminable; this is reiterated time and again throughout the Qur'an:

“Whoever wishes for the world needs to have knowledge, whoever wishes for the hereafter needs to have knowledge, whoever wishes for both needs to have knowledge” (*Al-Baqarah*: 201; *Al-A'raf*: 156; *An-Nahl*: 122).

The verses are a clear call for Muslims to pursue knowledge, remain in a continuous state of learning, and not forsake any effort to engage in education at any level. Islam considers it very unfortunate if a Muslim person stops studying and learning.

Aims: Defining, Communicating and Framing Institutional Aims

An important task of educational leaders is to define and communicate the institution's mission, purpose and goals in explicit terms. Leaders must have a clear vision of what their respective institution should accomplish.² Defining an institutional mission involves communicating this vision to staff, students and subordinates in an explicit way to create a sense of shared purpose that interlocks all the various activities taking place in the institution.

² Mohamad Johdi Salleh, “Best Practice of Framing and Communicating School Goals Among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Towards Realization of Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025,” *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention* 1, no. 6 (2014): 458-466; A. Luthra and R. Dahiya, “Effective Leadership is all About Communicating Effectively: Connecting Leadership and Communication,” *International Journal of Management & Business studies* 5, no. 3 (July-Sept 2015): 43-48.

The leader's role in defining the mission involves framing institutional goals and communicating these goals in a persistent fashion to the entire community.³ Operating without a clear mission is akin to beginning a journey without a destination in mind.

After defining the institutional or organisational goals, leaders need to communicate them to the working community. Communicating and explaining goals is one of the crucial roles of an educational leader. Having clear goals and high expectations commonly shared among members of its community is one of the characteristics of an effective educational institution. Common sense, if nothing else, indicates that a clearly defined purpose is necessary for any endeavour hoping for success. Working within the limits imposed by the national education philosophy, institutions must focus on tasks that are in accord with the philosophy and those they deem most important. This allows the institution to direct its resources and shape its functioning towards the realisation of those goals.⁴

Leaders should ensure that all staff and stakeholders understand the importance of the selected goals by discussing and reviewing them with all parties periodically during the academic year, especially in the context of instructional, curricular, and budgetary decisions. Both formal communication (e.g. goal statements, staff bulletins, newsletter articles, curricular and staff meetings, learning conferences, handbooks, and assemblies) and informal interaction (e.g. conversations with staff) can be used to communicate the institution's mission.⁵

Delivery: Effective Message Delivery through Principled and Righteous Interpersonal Communication

An effective leadership identifies and creates appropriate mechanisms to deliver the message of the organisation, and then

³ J. Anwar, S. Hasnu and S. Y. Janjua, S. Y., "Knowledge, Wisdom, Leadership and Vision: A Conceptual Framework for Learning Organizations," *World Applied Sciences Journal* 28, no. 1 (2013): 56–65.

⁴ Mohamad Johdi Salleh, "Best Practice of Framing and Communicating . . .

⁵ Ali Mohd Saleh Jubran. *Educational Administration: An Islamic Perspective* (Percetakan Zafar Sdn.Bhd: Kuala Lumpur, 2002).

translates strategy into action by converting it into an operational and practical situation. This can be done via ‘strategy maps’ and ‘balanced scorecards’. It is suggested that such approaches ‘provide a framework to describe and communicate strategy in a consistent and insightful way’. Communication that truly fosters good relationships among all members in the organization is stated in the Al-Qur’an, and we must be steadfast in the path of Allah to obtain His love, mercy and success (*Ali-Imran*: Verse 103).

Muhammad Awais and Qurat-ul-Ain stated that effective delivery involves aligning individuals, or the educational institution as a whole, to a future organisational state or position. A key element of this ability is to encourage commitment through shared values.⁶ Leaders, therefore, need to understand themselves and the values they hold and be able to nurture quality communication. Furthermore, it is important to find a way to build a connection between thinking and action. It must be understood that the concept of a learning organisation here refers to an organisation of people who are attuned to changes; and being able to respond to them can give valuable insights into how individuals and groups learn, and how to convert this knowledge into organisational action through effective ways of delivery.

One of the most crucial components of leadership competency is the delivery mechanism between leaders and their followers. It is very hard to discover the character and causes for the inadequacy perceived by followers without an honest and truthful communication. The leader-follower relationship should be open to censure. They should be prepared to listen to each other and converse frankly. In fact, experienced leaders show a matured interaction with followers that includes considerable effort and time at the early stage of study, to help followers develop their confidence, personality, skills, attitudes, problem solving, and communication at the stage of graduation.

Islam also emphasizes the importance of delivering messages and communicating with each other using good words. Allah says in

⁶ Muhammad Awais and Qurat-Ul-Ain, “Relationship between Self-efficacy, A Type Personality and Leader Effectiveness,” *International Journal of Engineering Research and Management (IJERM)* 5, no. 1 (2018): 33-38.

the Qur'an:

“And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], “Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give zakah.” Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing.” (*Al-Baqarah*: 83)

“Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky? It produces its fruit all the time, by permission of its Lord. And Allah presents examples for the people that perhaps they will be reminded. And the example of a bad word is like a bad tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, not having any stability.” (*Ibrahim*: 24-26)

The verses persuade Muslims to use good and respectful words in expression, conversations or discussions, and prohibit the use of potentially hurtful words. The same principle applies in leader-follower relationships. Muslim leaders should certainly practice principled and righteous interpersonal communication in delivering messages to portray obedience and love to the Creator. The way of delivering messages, which include the truth about Allah the Almighty, must be done in polite approaches and efficient strategies, failing which people will be turned away from Islam and its message. In *Surah Al-A'raf*, Allah educates Muslims about the importance of wisdom and politeness in delivering the message of truth and goodness: “Deliver the message of Allah in the wisest way and advise them in a much better way” (verse 79).

Empowerment: Leadership Intervention

Empowerment involves ‘adaptive capacity’ and ‘intervention’. Adaptive capacity can be defined as the ability to change and adapt to the corresponding situation or environment. In support of this view,

Hairuddin asserted that strategic leaders must be adaptable to change and new learning.⁷ They must have the skill of mastering chaos, complexity and change and the ability to acquire new ways of seeing and thinking. At the same time, they must maintain an enduring sense of purpose and a continuous sense of motivation. In an era of innovation and continuous learning, this is particularly important and may favour the emergent strategy or strategic intent approach. In addition, leaders should position themselves to take significant opportunities as they adapt to new information in a responsive and proactive way. Leaders can adapt and lead new strategic directions for the organisation if they have the cognitive flexibility linked to a mindset that welcomes and accepts change.

Baah⁸ and Hairuddin⁹ conceived empowerment as strategic inflection points. It means that strategic leaders must know how to identify the key moments for strategic change in organisations. These are critical points in an organisation's development when it is possible to develop new visions, create new strategies and move in new directions. The key here is knowing not only what to do strategically, but also *when* precisely to empower, intervene and change directions. Strategic educational leaders, therefore, have the ability to define not only *what* they need to change strategically, but also *when* the opportune time is to make the changes. Most importantly, they must know *how* and *when* to change strategies to effectively achieve the set goals and objectives of the organisation or institution.

This is perhaps the most powerful enforcement mechanism, more so than any government control. That sense of ultimate responsibility is exemplified in the following Qur'anic reminder:

“And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah.
Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned,

⁷ Hairuddin Mohd Ali, *The Strategic Leadership Fundamentals for Schools: A Global and Islamic Perspective* (Gombak: IIUM Press, 2016).

⁸ Kwasi Dartey-Baah, “The Cultural Approach to the Management of the International Human Resource: An analysis of Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions,” *International Journal of Business Administration* 4, no. 2 (2013):39-45.

⁹ Hairuddin Mohd Ali, *The Strategic Leadership* . . .

and they will not be wronged (i.e. treated unjustly)”
(*Al-Baqarah*: 281)

As individuals vary in their God-consciousness, fear of Allah and motivation for righteousness, other sanctions are necessary. One effective sanction against immoral conduct is social values and norms. Another inevitable enforcement mechanism in any organised society is government control and its monitoring and policing powers. In normative Islam, however, government role is no excuse for totalitarianism.¹⁰ The Prophet (S.A.W) was once asked by his companions, “*Why don’t you set prices (of goods) for yourself?*” The Prophet's answer was, “*Allah is the One who sets prices,*” referring to the natural laws of supply and demand that Allah has created which, under normal circumstances, are more valid than the decisions made by a given bureaucracy. This does not rule out, however, limited government intervention when necessary for the protection of public interest and within the Islamic process of *Shura* or mutual consultation.¹¹

Resilience: Being Fit for Strategic Leadership

Resilience is the ability to overcome the inevitable obstacles that come with change and the stress of working with the unknown. Resilient leaders are able to persist in meeting challenges of the future. Flexibility is the ability to adapt professionally and emotionally to the change and diversity which typifies work in future-oriented educational institutions.¹² On the other hand,

¹⁰ Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Parvina Saidova, “Best Practice of Transformational Leadership among Multi-Ethnic Headteachers of Primary Schools, Malaysia,” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 9, no. 3 (2013): 01-09.

¹¹ Wan Abdul Rahman and P. A. Castelli, “The Impact of Empathy on Leadership Effectiveness among Business Leaders in the United States and Malaysia,” *International Journal of Economics, Business, and Management Studies* 2, no. 3 (2013): 83–97; Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Robita Khalid, “Effectiveness of Principals Exemplary Leadership Practiced on School Achievements: Stakeholders’ Perceptions,” *European Journal of Educational Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018): 2501-1111.

¹² Kwasi Dartey-Baah, “Resilient Leadership: A Transformational-transactional Leadership Mix”, *Journal of Global Responsibility* 6, no. 1 (2015): 99-112; D. T. L. Shek and H. Leung, “Resilience as a focus of a subject on leadership and

reliability is about being there when things get tough. ‘Fit leaders’ are those who can be relied upon in times of high pressure and when problems need to be solved. Meanwhile, resourcefulness means leaders are mentally prepared to exploit opportunities that arise unexpectedly, to cope with uncertainties and ‘make things happen’ with limited resources.¹³

Indeed, Allah has decreed: “*Verily Allah commands that you establish justice and be efficient and proficient*” (*Al-Nahl*: 90). Therefore, a good Muslim will always feel obliged to put in extra effort, time and interest so that he would provide more than what is minimally required. Furthermore, *istiqamah* also requires Muslims to be patient (*sabr*) while undertaking any task or job entrusted to them. Allah has decreed: “*O you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah that you may prosper*” (*Ali Imran*: 200).

Patience has two dimensions. The first is mental patience, which is putting a restraint on the demands of anger and carnal desires. Mental patience is required in controlling anger and greed for wealth. The second is bodily patience, which refers to the endurance of physical pain felt in performing devotional or non-devotional acts (Al Buraey, 1990). Hence, patience can be divided into three types; first, patience in carrying out commandments; second, patience in avoiding *maksiat*; and third, patience in facing difficulties and hardship. Consequently, patience is an important requirement for success in the workplace. It is needed in dealing with disagreements, warding off the temptations of bribery, and combating laziness.¹⁴

intrapersonal development,” *International Journal on Disability Human Development* 15, no. 2 (2016): 149–155.

¹³ A. Narayanan and Mohammed Abeer, “Islamic Worldview, Religious Personality and Resilience Among Muslim Adolescent Students in India,” *Europe’s Journal of Psychology* 7, no. 4 (2017): 716-738; Robita Khalid, Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Nazifah Alwani Mohamad, “Best Practice of Islamic Leadership Principles among Principals of Excellent Secondary Schools Malaysia: Perceptions of Principals,” (Seminar Kebangsaan Amalan Terbaik Pendidikan, Pejabat Daerah Pendidikan Hilir Perak, 2 Disember 2017).

¹⁴ Baah, “Resilient Leadership: A Transformational-transactional . . .”; A. Narayanan and Mohammed Abeer, “Islamic Worldview, Religious Personality . . .

Styles of Leadership

According to Sharma and Jain, leadership style is “the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people”.¹⁵ They stated that leadership style is the pattern of behaviours engaged by a leader when dealing with employees. Leadership style as the combination of traits, skills, and behaviour that leaders use as they interact with their followers. The key to success is for leaders to have the range of skills that allows them to use the appropriate leadership styles in accordance with the situation or assigned tasks, based upon their leadership preference.

Autocratic Leadership Style

Authoritarian and *autocratic* are words that describe the type of leader who gives orders and expects instant obedience without argument. Sharma and Jain stated that an autocratic leader does not consult employees, nor do they allow employees to give any input.¹⁶ Employees are expected to obey orders with no explanations given. They defined that authoritarian leadership for leaders who are very directive and allow no participation in decisions. Autocratic leadership style involves the leader making all the decisions, wielding absolute power, assigning tasks to members of the group and maintaining a master-servant relationship with members of the group.

Democratic Leadership Style

In contrast to authoritarianism, democratic leadership is practised when a leader encourages group discussions and decision making, informs subordinates about conditions affecting their job, and welcomes their ideas and suggestions for collective improvement.¹⁷ Democratic leadership style involves the use of consultative approach that encourages group participation in decision making and

¹⁵ M. K. Sharma and S Jain, “Leadership Management: Principles, Models and Theories,” *Global Journal of Management and Business Studies* 3, no. 3 (2013): 309-318.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

maintaining a master-master relationship with group members. The democratic leadership style is also called the participative style as it encourages employees to take part in the decision making. Democratic leadership can produce high quantity work for long periods of time. Many employees like the trust they receive and respond with cooperation, team spirit, and high morale.

Laissez-faire Leadership Style

In this style, the leader allows employees to make decisions while still holding the responsibility for the decisions made. Sharma and Jain defined the laissez-faire leader as someone who has little confidence in his leadership ability, sets no goals for the group, and minimizes communication and group interaction. The laissez-faire leadership style is also known as the hands-off style. It is one in which the manager provides little or no direction and gives employees as much freedom as possible.¹⁸

According to Jubran laissez-faire leadership can be found in leaders who give complete freedom to the group and leave it up to subordinates to make individual decision on their own.¹⁹ The laissez-faire technique at the Education Department level is usually only appropriate when leading a staff of highly motivated and skilled education officers, who have produced excellent work in the past. This leadership style involves a non-interference policy, allows complete freedom to all employees, and has no particular way of attaining goals.

Humbleness and Humility

In most cultures today, *humble* and *humility* are words that are not so widely used. Being humble or practising humility is a state of God consciousness (*taqwa*). In the Qur'an, Allah uses multiple Arabic words to convey the meaning of *humility*. Among them are *tawadu* and *khoshou*. Being humble to Allah (or *zuhud*), leads one to becoming a successful leader who is respected and appreciated by

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ali Mohd Saleh Jubran. *Educational Administration* . . .

colleagues, followers and subordinates.²⁰

Humbleness and humility make an education administrator a corrective person who is willing to have a good attitude of submission and servant-hood, a person who acknowledges his faults and tries to correct the mistakes he makes in his administrative tasks. The feeling of humbleness is one of the fitrah as human who are weak and powerless: ‘And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, God likes not each arrogant boaster.’ (*Surah Luqman*: Verse 18).

Humility comes from knowing about God and recognizing His greatness, worshiping Him, loving Him and being in awe of Him; and it comes from knowing about oneself and one’s own faults, and weaknesses. Allah gives this characteristic to those who struggle to become close to Him through deeds of piety and righteousness. Humility is one of the greatest blessings Allah can bestow on a human being. It allows one to achieve genuine submission. Prophet Muhammad was truly submitted to God; his character was one of complete humility and based on sincere trust in God. He was a model of kindness and humbleness. In fact, the characteristics displayed by Prophet Muhammad were the exact opposite of pride and arrogance. Every aspect of his life reflected humbleness, even his walking, talking, sitting or eating.

Hence, by being a humble educational leader, it invites students to be interested to listen and hear about education, instruction and lesson learnt. The hikmah of being humble and modest educational leader in everything is the key to welcome students and other people to get closer to school and understand the true meaning of education and effective teaching-learning. Others would feel welcomed and comfortable to ask questions about education if the educational leader at school is humble and friendly to them. Therefore, as influential educational leader, they have to stay humble and modest in order to engage with school members, education officers and other people from different background and culture.²¹

²⁰ Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Robita Khalid, “Effectiveness of Principals Exemplary Leadership . . .

²¹ Ibid.

Integrity: Concept of Integrity

Integrity is a concept of consistency of actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations and outcomes. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions; consistency on his beliefs and principles without changing them along with time as well as being professional when making any decisions or actions.²²

In the Quran, Allah repeatedly talks about integrity: “O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and be with those who are true (in words and deeds)” (*Surah At-Tawba*: 119). Scholars agree that integrity is an important characteristic in an educational leader as it is a trait usually associated with effective leadership. It is also the foundation of personal characteristics that leads to the formation of a certain set of beliefs, decisions and actions. Allah (S.W.T) reminds mankind to practise integrity in their dealings:

“And O my people! Give full measure and weight in justice and reduce not the things that are due to the people, and do not commit mischief in the land, causing corruption.” (*Surah Hud*: 85)

Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Robita Khalid stated that a leader's behaviour must be consistent with and exhibit the values of honesty and trustworthiness.²³ These values set the leader apart from those under him, setting him as a role model for the organisation leading to its success. It also will set in the leader's mind regarding what is good and what is bad while running the organisation. If a leader has integrity, good moral values will be rife in the organisation. This will meet the people's expectation by serving the society and the stakeholders.

Allah has given His word in *Surah Al-Hadid*, verse 25:

²² Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Muhammad Hatta, “Best Practices of Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Towards Realization of Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Malaysia,” *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 5, no. 8. (2018): 223-233.

²³ Mohamad Johdi Salleh and Robita Khalid, “Effectiveness of Principals Exemplary Leadership . . .

“Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice. And We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allah may test who it is that will help Him (His religion), and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty.”

According to Sahih Muslim, “There are seven categories of people who God will shelter under His shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His. (One is) a just leader.”

It is, therefore, of utmost importance that educational leaders know that they are role models to colleagues, teachers and students, and are responsible for building ethical and moral norms for others to follow within the education institution. The Qur’an has emphasised that human beings must be just, as indicated in *Surah Al-Maidah*, verse 42;

“(They like to) listen to falsehood, to devour anything forbidden. So if they come to you (O Muhammad SAW), either judge between them, or turn away from them. If you turn away from them, they cannot hurt you in the least. And if you judge, judge with justice between them. Verily, Allah loves those who act justly.”

Integrity is also a key element in the education administration processes; with integrity, harmonious links between educational leaders, teachers and students are forged. Education organisations that are built upon the pillars of integrity and responsibility will earn confidence and respect. This is the reason why educational leader must act with integrity as it gives a positive impact on the education organisation and helps it achieve its mission, vision and purpose. Allah has stated in the Qur’an in *Surah At-Tawba*, verse 119: “O you who believe! Be afraid of Allâh, and be with those who are true in words and deeds.”

All the above aspects are related to one another and describe an integrity of a person especially in an educational leader.

Piety: Taqwa & Faithfulness

The word piety is mostly associated with the concepts of faithfulness, righteousness, and being dutiful. As Muslims, we are required to have firm belief towards the teaching of our religion and practice them in our daily life activities; thereafter we can achieve *taqwa* (piety). *Taqwa* (piety) is the Arabic meaning of self-defense and avoidance²⁴ denoting a believer's strict observance of the commandments of the *shariah* (Islamic laws) and divine laws of nature and life. From this definition, *taqwa* (piety) is extremely essential for leaders to practice what have been stated in the book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of Rasulullah (S.A.W). This value is the main characteristic to differentiate between Muslim and Non-Muslim leaders.

A leader should have God consciousness, or *taqwa*, and strive to be a God-fearing servant of Allah who is constantly aware of his individual vertical relationship with Allah (*hablun min Allah*) and his social horizontal relations with fellow human beings (*hablun min al-nas*). Allah (S.W.T) mentions in the Qur'an, "There will be disaster to mankind everywhere except for those who practised obligation towards Allah (S.W.T) and practise responsibilities and good relations among mankind" (*Ali-Imran*: verse 112). The Qur'an bestows the status of *muttaqqin* on those who engage in these practices and rewards them with a peaceful soul in this world and the next. Both the Qur'an and the Prophet (S.A.W) stated that Allah (S.W.T) would certainly secure the world and the hereafter for all true believers or *muttaqqin*. It is clearly stated in the Al-Qur'an that Allah SWT bestows a place of pious people from the unexpected direction (*Al-A'raf*: verse 97).

A Muslim leader is bound by the religion of Islam and is distinguished from other administrators by being God-conscious and God-fearing. This is the fundamental characteristic of Muslim leadership; it is especially instrumental in developing the self-confidence that leaders need to carry out their leadership tasks and duties. Self-confidence is a way of thinking, feeling and acting

²⁴ Ibn Kathir, *Muktasar Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 2, 7th edition (Beirut: Dar Al-Qur'an Al-Karim, 1991).

which implies that a leader accepts, respects, trusts and believes in himself. Confident and self-assured leaders with *taqwa* are likely to give moral strength to followers in the organisation.

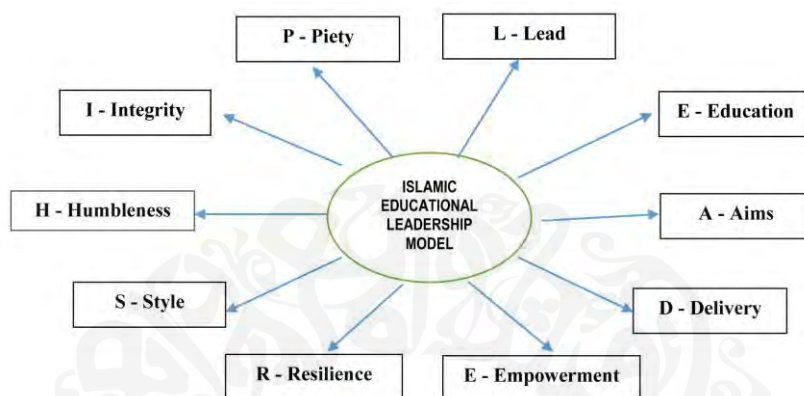
In Qur'an, Allah stated that 'when you have made a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put trust (in Him)' (*Ali-Imran* verse 159). Allah have reminded the believers to believe that whatever happens in their life, it is according to Allah's will. The only thing left for Muslims to do is to give their best effort and trust Allah. Leaders who have goals and objectives that they want to achieve in their work of leadership confront a lot of challenges to convince other people. After doing their very best, they have to rely on Allah and trust Allah whatever the result may be. Indeed, Allah is the holder of the hearts of His creations and by saying that, it is only relevant that only Allah is the one who will decide the outcome.

Moreover, what needs to be done is to enhance and improve one's relationship with Allah. In this way, a person or leader needs not worry about what is being said or questioned by others as the work of a leader needs to be done solely for the benefits of the followers and organization for the reward from Allah. There will be tests and challenges as a leader but with sincere intention, the goal and mission of the work of a leader can be achieved with the help from Allah towards the success in the world and hereafter.

Educational Leadership Model: An Islamic Perspective

This paper proposes an Islamic educational leadership model--contrived from a number of authentic sources that included the Qur'an, *Sunnah* and biographies of the Prophet's (S.A.W) companions. The model outlines a set of comprehensive principles meant for transforming the Muslim world in accord with the era of cyber revolution. The contrivance of the principles was based on the Qur'an and prophetic traditions, as well as on the thoughts and writings of classical and contemporary scholars. The model can be synopsized as L.E.A.D.E.R.S.H.I.P, with every letter representing a principle that leaders must observe or exhibit. In this model, *L* stands for *leading*, *E* for *education*, *A* for *aims*, *D* for *delivery*, *E* for *empowerment*, *R* for *resilience*, *S* for *style*, *H* for *humbleness* and

humility, *I* for *integrity*, and finally *P* for *piety*. The model is graphically illustrated in the figure below:



Islamic Educational Leadership Model

The Qur'an and the Prophet (S.A.W) repeatedly highlighted the paramount importance of education and its supremacy over other things. It is stated in the Qur'an that Allah will exalt to high ranks those among believers who have knowledge and expend efforts to seek knowledge (*Al-Mujadalah*: 11). In this verse, Allah promises to grant high ranks to those who seek and beautify themselves with knowledge. Based on the same understanding, Muslims who wish to be elevated in rank in the sight of Allah should strive to educate themselves and acquire knowledge. In a narration, the Prophet (S.A.W) additionally mentioned that whoever pursues a path for the sake of seeking knowledge, Allah will make the path to paradise easy for him (hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah). History has shown that the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) were truthful, honest, sincere, generous and brave Muslims who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Allah (*jihad fisabilillah*). They proved that they loved Allah and His Messenger much more than they loved themselves.

Education as truth and truth as education should be taken as the niche of any academic or teaching profession. It should be practised across all disciplines within an educational institution and held sacred by leaders, faculty and staff. Institutional aims, set as the

destination points of an institution, have to be clearly and explicitly outlined, such as the IIUM's vision and mission – acronymed as IIICEs or TRIPLE ICE to represent the ideas of *Integration, Islamization, Internationalization, and Comprehensive Excellence*. Curriculum delivery using cognitively engaging methodology and technology tools is vital for students of a learning institution to receive knowledge. Giving priority to rules, regulations, and certification in order to achieve the desired outcomes should not be tolerated. The management line and supporting staff at all levels must shoulder their responsibilities with resilience and robustness.

It is the leader's choice to exercise any style of governance that is likely to work in his institutional context. It could be an autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, dictatorial, charismatic, or transformational style of governance. In addition, practising humility is part of good governance and is, therefore, encouraged in Islam so that a leader may command the love, respect and appreciation of his subordinates. A leader must also be intelligent and far-sighted with high integrity and a strong sense of *amanah*. He is fundamentally accountable for prohibiting evil and bringing goodness to the organisation, and for guiding his subordinates towards piety. From the Islamic perspective, good governance and leadership is a journey undertaken together by a leader and his entire organisation to acquire the blessings of Allah SWT and true success in this world and the next.

Conclusion

It is clear that educational leadership is more than just having a vision about an ideal future. It is about acknowledging the complex and unpredictable nature of the future, and developing strategies to prepare for the unexpected rather than just planning for what is known to come. The job of a strategic Islamic leader is to point the way forward for the organisation through developing and communicating far-sighted and far-reaching strategies. Having a future strategy means more than just having a 'strategic plan'. In good leadership and good governance terms, it means working to understand the world of subordinates and prepare them to take their place as valued citizens of a global community. In fact, these characteristics of effective leadership may be synthesized in a

ten-principle model synopsis simply as L-E-A-D-E-R-S-H-I-P, with each letter illustrating a principle of good governance. From an Islamic perspective, the model illustrates efficient, versatile, transformational and sustainable leadership workable in the current era of globalization and Industrial Revolution 4.0.



AL-SHAJARAH

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Contents

THE QUEST FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONALIZATION OF BANGLADESH'S HIGHER EDUCATION: INVESTIGATING THE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMIC LEADERS <i>Hairuddin Mohd Ali & Tareq M. Zayed</i>	1
USING THE MANY-FACET RASCH MODEL TO DETERMINE CUTSCORES AND RESOLVE FUNDAMENTAL STANDARD SETTING ISSUES <i>Noor Lide Abu Kassim, Kamal J. I. Badrasawi & Nor Zatul-Iffa</i>	25
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE <i>Mohamad Johdi Salleh</i>	49
THE EFFECTS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS STATISTICS, PERCEIVED ABILITY, LEARNING PRACTICES AND TEACHING PRACTICES ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN STATISTICS: A REVIEW <i>Zamalia Mahmu, Nor Zatul-Iffa Ismail, Noor Lide Abu Kassim & Mohammad Said Zainol</i>	71
JAMA'AH AND COLLEGIAL MODEL IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: LESSONS AND PRINCIPLES LEARNED FROM QURAN AND SUNNAH <i>Azam Othman, Surayya Abu Bakar & Ahmad Faizuddin</i>	99
THE PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF THE INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AMONGST THE ACADEMICS OF INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA (IIUM) <i>Suhailah Hussien, Arifin Mamat & Ssekamanye Siraje Abdallah</i>	117
MALAYSIAN ADOLESCENTS' MORAL AWARENESS AND CULTURAL CONFORMITY: SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY'S EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT <i>Siti Rafiah Abd Hamid, Nik Suryani Nik Abd Rahman, Khamsiah Ismail & Haniza Rais</i>	131
FIGHTING CORRUPTION THROUGH EDUCATION IN INDONESIA AND HONG KONG: COMPARISONS OF POLICIES, STRATEGIES, AND PRACTICES <i>Dairabi Kamil, Amirul Mukminin, Ismail Sheikh Ahmad & Noor Lide Abu Kassim</i>	155
THE EFFECT OF STUDENT'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON SELF-LEADERSHIP IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY <i>Ismail Hussein Amzat, Wajeha Thabit Al-Ani & Habibat Abubakar Yusuf</i>	191
TEACHING ISLAMIC VALUES THROUGH PROBLEM SOLVING IN MATHEMATICS: A CASE STUDY <i>Madihah Khalid, Supiah Saad, Rosemaliza Kamalludeen & Nurul Hassanah Ismail</i>	217
MUSLIM STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF WESTERN VALUES AS PRESENTED IN ENGLISH TEXT BOOKS: INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC SCHOOL MALAYSIA (SECONDARY) AS A CASE STUDY <i>Merah Souad, Tahraoui Ramdane, Nor Hayati Husin, Madihah Khalid, Noor Lide Abu Kassim & Suzana Suhailawaty Md Sidek</i>	241
THE USEFULNESS OF MUSIC AS A TOOL OF TEACHING ISLAMIC EDUCATION: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE <i>Tahraoui Ramdane, Merah Souad, Ratinah Marusin & Suzana Suhailawaty Md Sidek</i>	267
LETTING THE LEARNERS LEAD: ADAPTING FCM TO ENHANCE LEARNER MOTIVATION, INTERACTION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT <i>Abdul Shakour Preece & Popoola Kareem Hamed</i>	287
VALIDITY EVIDENCE USING EXPERT JUDGMENT: A STUDY OF USING ITEM CONGRUENCE INVOLVING EXPERT JUDGMENTS FOR EVIDENCE FOR VALIDITY OF A READING TEST <i>Zailani binti Jusoh, Ainol Madziah Zubairi & Kamal J I Badrasawi</i>	307
SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT THEORY: A CRITICAL REVIEW FROM ISLAMIC THEORIES OF ADMINISTRATION <i>Jafar Paramboor & Mohd Burhan Ibrahim</i>	321
TEACHERS' SCHOOL GUIDANCE PRACTICE TOWARD PISA ENHANCEMENT: A COMPARISON BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND FINLAND <i>Nurshida Mohd Ishak, Ismail Hussein Amzat & Byabazaire Yusuf</i>	337
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	369

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